

NEWS RELEASE



United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE

PO Box 609 Olympia WA 1-800 435-5883

www.nass.usda.gov/wa



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Contact: Chris Messer (360) 902-1940

NASS to Assess Financial Situation of Washington Farmers And Ranchers

NASDA interviewers representing USDA's Washington Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service are contacting local farmers and ranchers asking financial questions for the 2005 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

The study is being conducted during February and March. Producers will be asked for detailed facts on production expenses, assets, liabilities, sales, and operation characteristics. This information helps serve the agricultural community in the following ways:

- ▶ **Farm bill** legislation, especially modifications to the foreign trade rule, was based in part on ARMS data.
- ▶ **Federal grants** to our State and community are allocated based on per capita income projections from ARMS data and other sources.
- ▶ **Grower Associations** and elected representatives use the results to create and support farm policy—including estate tax reform—that promotes production agriculture.
- ▶ **Washington State University** uses the data to teach strategies for increasing productivity and efficiency on operations, and for retirement and succession planning.
- ▶ **Producers** use the data to determine the feasibility and profitability gained by expanding or changing aspects of their operation.

"Reliable, accurate descriptions of the current economic health of Washington's farms and ranches are crucial," said Chris Messer, Director, Washington Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, "especially when policymakers, farm organizations, analysts, lenders and others make decisions that affect growers. This will be the last chance to provide an annual economic snapshot before the 2007 Farm Bill is finalized."

Producers chosen to participate in the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) have been mailed a questionnaire or will be visited by an interviewer during February and March. During 2004, the USDA distributed to Washington producers \$173.8 million in price support payments, \$79.9 million in conservation funding, and \$23.6 million in disaster assistance payments. Data from the ARMS is used to measure the benefits of direct, counter-cyclical, and ad hoc emergency payments as producers continue to look to the marketplace for economic reward.

Results will be published in a series of USDA reports on the current farm financial situation. *Farm Production Expenditures*, the first report with results from the survey, will be released in August 2006. For a copy of the finished report or to obtain other agricultural statistics, visit the National Agricultural Statistics Service website at www.nass.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.